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WAR WITH SPAIN.

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"Let us get ready to-day, move quickly, strike heavily and effectively, and the victory is won."

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SPEECH

OF

HON. GEORGE W. RAY,

OF NEW YORK,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

IN FAVOR OF

A VIGOROUS AND EFFECTIVE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR,

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 1898.

"Every patriotic man and woman, every toiler in the shop and factory, and upon the farm, will take pride in helping 'Uncle Sam' drive Spanish misrule from the Western Hemisphere."

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WASHINGTON.

1898.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

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SPEECH  
OF  
HON. GEORGE W. RAY.

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The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 10100) to provide ways and means to meet war expenditures—

Mr. RAY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have listened to-day with such patience as I could command to peace advocates and greenback advocates and beer advocates, and I realize now that every weakling in this House has some ground upon which to oppose legislation which is presented for the purpose of raising revenue to carry on the war with Spain which we all ought to favor. On the Democratic side of this House three weeks ago every man was yelling at the top of his voice for the recognition of the Cuban Republic, and he wanted war "right off"—immediate war. Now that we have war, many want peace and deplore war; some say there is not going to be any war of consequence, or if there shall be war, they do not want any war tax levied, because it is unnecessary.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. BRUMM] was on his feet advocating the issue of greenbacks to pay war expenses; and he referred to the days of 1861, and said we should repeat that experience. What are greenbacks? Mere promises to pay, at the best. If I give you my note payable a year hence, it will not pass at 100 cents on the dollar, but will be discounted from the very beginning, unless it is due at once or an agreement to pay interest is written in the bond. Should we issue greenbacks, they will be discounted from the very beginning. Therefore, even if we have unbounded confidence in this Government and its willingness and ability to pay some time, we do not want any issue of greenbacks. Let us be manly. Let us issue bonds. Let us say that we will pay interest; that we will pay principal and interest at a fixed date.

Mr. RIDGELY rose.

Mr. RAY of New York. I have only a limited time. I do not wish to yield.

Mr. Chairman, the bill now before the House is an extraordinary measure to provide extraordinary revenues to enable us to prosecute a war with Spain which was precipitated by the extraordinary conduct of the Democrats on the floor of this House. I do not say that the war is not a just and a necessary war, for I believe it is, but I do say that it was precipitated by our Democratic friends, many of whom now not only condemn it as unnecessary and unwise but oppose the enactment of wise legislation necessary to raise the money with which to prosecute it. For months they clamored for the recognition of the belligerent rights of the so-called Republic of Cuba and then for the recognition of the independence of the Republic of Cuba. Either course would have involved the United States in war with Spain if such policy had been followed by an honorable course toward the citizens of Cuba.



The Republicans wisely and justly have seen fit to recognize the independence of the people of Cuba, that they "are, and of right ought to be, free and independent," and have coupled that declaration with a demand that Spain evacuate the island and leave its people to establish a free and an independent government of their own. This course was also supported by the Democrats in this House. This was made necessary by the cruel and inhuman conduct of the Spanish Government toward her subjects in Cuba—a course of conduct not tolerable and not permissible. For three years a war for freedom has been waged by the people of that island lying within sight of our shores and almost under the shadow of our flag. Beaten in fair battle, Spain resorted to a policy of extermination of a people she could not conquer. Men, old, helpless men; women, weak and feeble; children, innocent and helpless, were herded and penned and surrounded by a guard of pitiless soldiers and left to starve.

Fruitful fields were laid waste and turned to deserts. Homes were burned and murder was legalized. By the decrees of that infamous butcher, Weyler, 250,000 helpless human beings were killed by sword or bullet or starvation within twelve short months. Commerce was interfered with, our commercial interests destroyed, our citizens deprived of property and unjustly imprisoned, and, finally, to crown the acts of infamy being committed in the Western Hemisphere, a magnificent war ship of the United States Navy, on a friendly visit to a supposed friendly port, was treacherously destroyed and 266 of our sailors and marines, reposing in fancied security, were hurried into eternity.

The President counseled a conservative course; he foresaw the unwisdom of hasty action. Having participated in one war, he knew the horrors of another, and especially did he know the expense that would necessarily attend the prosecution of hostilities between the United States and Spain. Of necessity we are the attacking party in the pending conflict. We can not stand on the defensive and drive Spain from Cuba. Spanish armies will not evacuate that fair island at our bidding. Force must be used, and now that the die has been cast, that the ultimatum has been pronounced, the Government of the United States must see to it that Cuba is free. It has been predicted that there will be no conflict, no clash of arms, no roar of guns, no shedding of blood, no loss of life.

I heard such senseless claims thirty-six years ago, when war clouds hovered on the horizon. Four years of war followed. Hundreds of thousands of men met in mortal combat on hundreds of battlefields and death and desolation and ruin were abroad in the land. Not millions, but billions of dollars were required to maintain the conflict. The credit of this nation was strained to the utmost, and a depreciated currency constituted our only circulating medium, while bond issues were absolutely necessary to procure current funds with which to procure the supplies and munitions of war actually necessary to a maintenance of the conflict.

Mr. Chairman, the indications are that we have entered on a conflict not of days or months, but of possible years. Spanish territory is not contiguous. The Kingdom of Spain lies 3,000 miles over the sea, and Cuba is a hundred miles over the water from our nearest land. We have fighting men, but so has Spain; we have a magnificent Navy, but so has Spain; we have resources, but so has Spain. When Cuba is free and the last Spaniard is



driven into or over the sea, the war is not necessarily ended. We may have to conquer a peace at the Canaries or possibly at the gates of Madrid. We should remember that when the eagles of France were planted on every flagstaff in every town in Spain she was not conquered, but finally repelled the invaders. Let us not belittle the work we have undertaken.

No patriotic or brave man flinches or hesitates. The call for men has gone forth, and nobly and patriotically has it been answered. But brave men and noble women, magnificent war ships and first-class guns can not alone win this fight. The soldiers must be fed and clothed and paid. We must have coal and powder and shot and shell. Patriotism is grand, but war is hell. If we would win, if we would save Cuba and make her people free, if we would avenge the *Maine*, if we would honor our flag and bring an honorable and a speedy peace, we must have money and hundreds of millions of it. We must have the sinews of war if we would strike quickly, strongly, and effectively. Shall we pay our soldiers with an irredeemable paper currency? Shall we confiscate property? Shall we wage this war with wind and mere promises? No, sir. We must resort to special extraordinary taxation to raise money. We must pay as we go, but we can not tax our people beyond their power or capacity to pay. We must have for immediate use millions of dollars; and when we ask the use of these millions, we must promise their return, and the dollars that we return must be the equal in every respect of those we borrow. And if we are honest, we will return these dollars with a reasonable interest. The money we want now does not belong to all the people, but to individuals of the nation; and when it is asked for the common good of all, then all will join to return it with a reasonable compensation for its temporary use. Then interest-bearing bonds are a necessity and the only security upon which we can obtain the money we want and must have.

Men will not loan their money in large sums and on long time without having something to show for it, without a reasonable interest to compensate them for the loss of its use while employed by other hands. The idea once advocated, and which still is popular with some, that this Government can manufacture money with ink, paper, and a printing press finds few advocates at the present time. As well might we attempt to reduce Morro Castle with popguns and paper wads as to attempt to purchase in the markets of the world guns, munitions of war, powder, shot, and shell with a mere paper currency. We have had experience in this matter and know better than to repeat our bitter experiences. The loan proposed by this bill is so shaped that every patriotic citizen having \$50 or more to loan at a low rate of interest may find a safe, nontaxable investment.

We are told that the extraordinary taxes will be burdensome; that they are unequal and unjust. That they are and will be burdensome all will admit. All taxation is to an extent and in a sense burdensome, and all special war taxation is of course an extra burden. An extra tax is placed on beer, wines, liquors, cigars, cigarettes, and many other articles. I know of no articles more worthy of special taxation than these. Those who let them alone will bear none of the burden imposed by such taxation; those who use them will pay the extra tax voluntarily and, we trust, cheerfully. No one will for an instant claim that the habitual use of intoxicants or narcotics is necessary to promote health or prolong life. The proposition to tax tea and coffee has been wisely aban-

doned. But should the war be prolonged, should it prove more expensive than we suspect, such a tax may be added without exciting much adverse criticism. Every patriotic man and woman, every toiler in the shop and factory and upon the farm, will take pride in helping "Uncle Sam" drive Spanish misrule from the Western Hemisphere. That the taxes proposed by this bill are unequal or unjust I deny. They reach the rich, the corporations, the luxuries. True, they may reach the poor, but they are very lightly burdened by this bill.

For political effect, and for no other purpose, the cry is raised here that we should resort to an income tax. The Supreme Court is assaulted with bitterness for having decided that such a tax is unconstitutional. But, say some of our Democratic friends, we should again enact such a law and let the matter again be brought before that court, for perhaps it will reverse the former decision. The author of that brilliant scheme, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BAILEY], has no confidence in the learning, ability, and integrity of the gentlemen composing that court. Instead of advocating the raising of money by legal and constitutional methods, instead of teaching respect for and confidence in the legally constituted authorities of the land, instead of massing our forces and equipping our sailors and soldiers for battle speedily and effectively, he would halt and quibble and inaugurate a petty war with our highest court. Mr. Chairman, what we now want is a united people; a system of taxation we know we can enforce—not one we have every reason to believe we can not execute. We want money, and victories over the enemy, not vexatious lawsuits, inefficient laws, and bickerings among the people.

Our fleet is before Havana; the booming of cannon has been heard at Matanzas; the prizes are coming in; our Army is concentrating; the beat of the drum is heard, and the boys in blue from every State in the Union—North, South, East, and West—are marching. In little Cuba the patriot army is waiting for our promised aid, and the thousands on thousands of her starving people are crying for food. Daily they fall and die for want of bread. This is no time for hesitation, for bickering, for a dilly-dallying policy. This is not the time for experimental legislation, for the enactment of revenue legislation, we have every reason to believe, would not be effective.

We must pursue an energetic course and act promptly. The eyes of the nations of the world are upon us. Our national honor and prowess are at stake. Can we move together and strike as one man; can we furnish the money at call, pay as we go, and command and merit respect among the nations? are the questions of the hour. Shall our Army and Navy be fully equipped and ready for battle at once? is the question. It is not a question as to what we may or can do next year, but what we can and will do now. Let us get ready to-day, move quickly, strike heavily and effectively, and the victory is won. But if we hesitate and quarrel at home, our armies will lie idle, our Navy will do nothing, the Cubans will starve, and we shall deserve the contempt of all civilized peoples. This is not the time for long speeches or wars of words, but for action.

It is what we do, not what we say, that will meet the approval or disapproval of our citizens. The heavy, well-equipped, and quick-moving battalions win the victories. Our cause is just. The cries of a suffering, oppressed, and an outraged people have gone up to God, and He has put it in the hearts of the American



people to give liberty to a race and establish a new Republic. It is through the instrumentality of the United States of America that this is to be accomplished, and every consideration of patriotism and of selfish interest demands that we act speedily and effectively. [Applause.]

Therefore it is that the views of particular individuals should be subordinated to the opinions of the great majority. Advice is not to be spurned or suggestions disregarded, but unity of action is imperatively demanded. In union there is strength, in disunion destruction. Therefore it is that we appeal to all classes, to all men of all parties, to unite on this bill as one calculated to bring revenues speedily, fill the Treasury, and insure a speedy and decisive victory.

Those who try to use this war for partisan purposes, political success, or personal aggrandizement will only deserve and receive the contempt of their fellows. It is a war in the interest of humanity and is waged to conquer a peace, a lasting and a glorious peace. We would restore to cultivation the devastated and barren fields of the Island of Cuba, send her starving people to their homes, drive Spain across the sea, and teach her to respect our flag.

I have been astounded to hear a few Democrats on the floor of this House state that if we had recognized the independence of the Republic of Cuba one year ago there would have been no war between Spain and the United States and that peace would now reign on that island. How such recognition would have produced such a result is not pointed out, and no reason for such a statement can be given. Such remarks fall only from the mouths of those who would wage war with their mouths and would flee from the face of an armed foe. Such men would sacrifice their fellow-men, but would not give one drop of their own blood. Such men take every course and advocate every policy that produces war, but when war is on they cry peace, peace. I am happy to be able to state that but few, very few, make such statements.

Mr. Chairman, the hour is fast approaching when we are to give our votes on this measure, and I trust that no gentleman will be against it.

Within the next hour we are to vote. I could wish to change some features of this bill, for it falls heavily on some interests in my district. But for the common good of all I am willing to proceed now to enact this bill into law for delays are dangerous.

The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. WALKER], who is a banker, is opposed to putting stamps on checks for more than \$20, and other papers of that description. He says it will be inconvenient. Mr. Chairman, all taxes are inconvenient. It is many times inconvenient to do the things we ought to do and must do if we would live long, honorably, peacefully, and prosperously. No man regrets the necessity for this war and this consequent taxation more than I, but it was unavoidable.

I regret the inhuman and beastly atrocities of Spain, but I glory in the fact that in my day and while I live the possibility of their repetition on this side the globe is to be ended. I am willing and I know the people of the United States are willing to put their shoulders to the wheel of the car of progress and see it move forward. They are willing to deny themselves luxuries and even necessities, to suffer inconvenience, that freedom may triumph and the character and dignity of our nation be maintained.



Yes, Mr. Chairman, again will our people unite in the battle hymn of the Republic:

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me,  
As he died to make men holy let us die to make men free  
While God goes marching on.

[Applause.]

I admire the spirit of this people; I admire their patriotism. We are ready for whatever may come. But let not gentlemen oppose this bill upon the ground that the war is to be a short one or that an immense amount of money is not required. We can stop taxation at any time, but we can not stop the war. We will not stop the war until the victory is won, whether we have to cross the sea to win it or not. We must remember, as I have already stated, when dealing with Spain, that even if we have navies, so has Spain; if we have armies, so has Spain; if we have resources, so has Spain.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RAY of New York. I ask leave to continue my remarks for two minutes.

Mr. SIMPSON. I want to give notice that after this I shall have to object to these requests, no matter how disagreeable it may be to do so, because there are so many members wanting to speak on this bill who have not had the opportunity to do so. I do not object to the request of the gentleman from New York.

Mr. RAY of New York. If we have resources, so has Spain; if we have patriotism, so has Spain; and I believe (though I will not predict) that she will fight, and fight long and bitterly.

Let us, then, act wisely here to-day; let us stand by the policy adopted, the declarations made, and the flag of the Union; let us vote war taxes upon the assumption that we have before us a long and a hard war. If we do this, we shall act patriotically and wisely. And when we borrow money, let us borrow it as we would of our individual friends, pay at the proper time, and in the meantime wage war as a serious and an expensive business. [Applause.]





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